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Faculty Senate Minutes - August 4, 2017 (Retreat)

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**The University of Southern Mississippi
Faculty Senate Retreat 2017–18**

August 4, 2017

10 a.m.–4 p.m.

Hardy Hall, Gulf Coast Campus

Attendance: Mac Alford, Cheryl Jenkins, Adrienne McPhaul, David Holt, Bob Press, Tim Rehner, Melinda McLelland, Jennifer Courts, Amber Cole, Ann Marie Kinnell, Bradley Green, Lilian Hill, David Lee, Sharon Rouse, Anne Sylvest, Charkarra Anderson-Lewis, Cynthia Handley, Susan Howell, Scott Milroy, Jeremy Scott, Eric Saillant, Donald Redalje, Westley Follett, Heidi Lyn, Tom Rishel, Kenneth Zantow

Guests: Kelly James-Penot, Alan Thompson

10-10:15 Introductions

10:15-10:30 Officer Reports, Assignment of Committees

President–

Plans to visit departments/schools during school term to hear their concerns;
Keltoum Rowland (Foreign Languages) resigned from Senate this summer;
Senate president allowed to make replacement with consent of Senate; Miles Doleac was chosen by vote of Foreign Languages, communicated via Chris Miles (chair), to replace Rowland (Senate consented, Doleac approved)
Committee Assignments – some people did not select a committee during last Senate meeting; those in attendance who did not select a committee were asked to sign up for committees; there was appeal for additional members to join Finance Committee since there are few members
There are also calls for members to additional university committees; Mac will let us know when we need to nominate someone; the Alcohol and Drug Committee needs a nominee (David Holt volunteered)

President-Elect – No report

Secretary – No report

Secretary-Elect – No report

10:30-11:15 Committee Meetings

11:15-11:45 Committee Reports

Administrative Evaluations – Will add administrators on the Coast this year and keep process with changes that were made last year; would like to email evaluation results this year to department chairs, hand deliver to Deans on up; will update Qualtrix once we have reorganization (depending on roles of administrators, chairs role will change and director will have more authority)

Awards Committee – will send a request for any rubrics used in departments/colleges to evaluate their awards; with reorganization, not sure how awards will fall (more awards)

will be needed to recognize the same number of people and it's important to recognize and reward talent); will make sure that everyone knows that there is food at the ceremony (would like to see more people there); as we consolidate, colleges may want to increase the number of awards; would like to see awards recipients listed online; (Bob Press – would committee consider awarding certificates to people who are not recipient of the larger awards, but are doing great things (awards for tiers/levels)?); greater recognition for things people are doing; Chad Miller (Chair of the University Relations Committee last year) was in conversation Jim Coll to maybe hear about faculty work in community forums like football games.

Elections – Elections went well last year; will continue with same process this year under the current structure (before reorganization); new process will be worked on once the reorganization is figured out; Alford suggested that Rishel, Chair of the Elections Committee and a computer scientist, craft a decision-tree for future by-laws and to simplify elections.

Finance – No Report

Academics – Reorganization is top of concern; good call to separate governance from academics committees.

Governance – Would like to survey of feelings of faculty on campus; want to continue to give faculty a voice; the process as we go forward is still confusing with reorganization on the horizon.

Gulf Coast – No Report

Welfare and Environment – Main priorities for the year: Equity, Diversity, Recycling/Sustainability, Compression/Inversion, Vision (look for news ways to inspire faculty to share vision)

11:45- Noon Lunch

Noon-1:30 Administration (Bennett and Moser)

Bennett:

Houston Ernst brought in to help President's Office with legislature and delegates in Washington

IHL actions in last meeting (one well reported and another not so much); extended contract by two additional years in addition to the salary increase; contract extension much appreciated

Enrollment – our goal has been to be to turn enrollment numbers around and that commitment has been very consistent; also hope to increase the quality of students in the classroom

State appropriations continues to decline (down to about 26 percent range); we have about five revenue streams to allocate funds; what makes up the difference are

tuition dollars; the focus on enrollment management is to get students who legitimately have the ability to complete college level work in four years; we have to be more intrusive with students; we are now at a place where we will be significantly up in enrollment for the fall; with that is that those students have increased academic readiness (ACT scores higher than they were last year); increase in enrollment and increase in the quality of student has occurred

Governance - We continue to have a strong relationship with IHL; proud of that healthy relationship; the relationship with the legislature continues to be strong; the delegation in Washington D.C. is also solid

Plan for Academic Reorganization – President is proud of how plan moved along and is comfortable with the final product; called for individual meetings with campus community over the summer and got good feedback; will be searching for administrators; will postpone search for VP for Finance and Administration (CFO) and Allyson Easterwood will remain so that all efforts can be placed on searching for two new deans and VP of Student Affairs; will launch search for CFO next year

Open floor for comments/questions to Bennett and Moser:

Estimate of enrollment increase?

Bennett: Impressive (won't say more)

Searching for two deans in which colleges?

Bennett: Nursing and Arts & Sciences

Any reason not to do other deans?

Moser: it's a practical reason; Chris Winstead and Kathleen Masters only committed for a year; have others doing interim work who could continue on; highest concern is Arts & Sciences dean; VPSA is also significant

For searches, how much engagement from faculty to be part of that process?

Bennett: From the listening session, one thing that came up was the job description and to give people the opportunity to weigh in on that description; we have to figure out a way to solicit widespread opinions/thoughts on what should go into those descriptions; your thoughts and opinions will be solicited and be included to the extent that they can; still having conversations about whether to contract with a search firm or use some other model; I think the person who will be our dean probably doesn't know that they will have this position, we have to recruit; we have to get comfortable with what it will take financially to get a person here that would do the job

Moser: I know that there is some anxiety about A&S dean search; charged a screening committee already for VPSA search and used a search firm;

You (Bennett) recently got a new position with CUSA. Explain that and what that means for the university?

Bennett: President of the Board of CUSA; the NCAA is always led by a person who has been a president of a university; our university is perceived favorably by other institutions in the NCAA; having a strong voice at the table matters

Speak to next steps in implementation of reorganization plan?

Bennett: the Board (IHL) has been asked to review plan for final approval; they have not said when they will take up the plan/which meeting; once they meet about it and approve, then we can move forward; can draw the conclusion that the board will approve the plan based on our relationship with them (could be August board meeting); with their approval, the Provost will move forward quickly to begin implementation

Moser: as the plan is formulated we will follow same type of model considering faculty input as before; I envision a steering committee to work on a variety of governance issues that come up; heavy lifting will occur in the fall semester and continue in spring with full implementation by July 1; the second year the concentration will be on the core college Arts & Sciences so that the dean will have input; timeline could be refined once we start moving

President: the Provost and I have not approached this with the idea of firing people; committed to finding a place for everyone; Provost: may be anxiety; will have staff council member as part of the reorg process; committee work will be very important this fall to make sure we are efficient

Areas where we are vulnerable?

Bennett: Budget cuts from the state are an area where we continue to be very vulnerable; what happens if we have a reduction in the current year? How can we move away from this place of vulnerability; request that I ask from each of you, use whatever resources and relationships that you have to talk to decision makers about what a budget cut would mean to us; keep an eye towards those type of conversations (budget cuts)

Moser: With the issue of summer pay, improvements in Scheduling and Enrollment is necessary

How information is shared with Governance Groups? When documents are available (e.g. updated reorganization plan)?

Moser: We realize that there should be a better way to communicate to campus from the office of Provost; communication issues have been a part of the process

1:30 – 2 Response to Administration comments

No time for “real” questions and conversation; we as a Senate can ask for questions beforehand; must make sure that everyone is engaged in reorganization; may not be as much support from faculty for reorganization as administrators (President/Provost) think; may not be in touch with faculty and our needs

A lot of questions can be asked in less formal sessions (exec meetings, after cabinet meetings, etc.); encourage you to give exec committee questions to ask administrators

Questions remain about faculty input in the dean hiring process

Need to have larger conversation about summer and summer pay (what “summer” is and the role of “summer”)

Online credit hours are up and we seem to be moving in that direction; how much of an “online” school do we want to be? Academic Committee to meet with Academic Council to come up with a university plan for online education and evaluation; also a good time to look at student evaluations as well; Gulf Coast campus should be concerned about increased online credit hours; service load becomes heavier with more online; online numbers on Coast are extremely high; what is the faculty’s role now; are we adding students with online options, or are we moving them

Research Faculty — At most major research universities, up to half or more of the faculty are Research Faculty, grant-funded faculty with no teaching responsibilities, but with the graduate faculty status to serve on graduate student committees and advise graduate students. This is a way to increase the funding for the university through increased F&A revenue. Having a large pool of Research Professors would give USM a stronger profile nationally and internationally and would help in recruiting Tenure-Track Faculty as well as more Research Faculty and both undergraduate and graduate students. It would be best if the university could offer laboratory/office space and other support resources to encourage Research Professor candidates to come to USM. These resources may need to come from the VP for Research and from colleges and departments.

Reorganization Plan: ALC governance doesn’t represent all bodies on campus and they will be part of the subcommittee that will be a part of implementation of the reorganization plan; concerned about governance; Visual and Performing Arts have already merged and some others have already started to merge; biology is also having preemptive discussions about where people will go, etc.; ask for documentation/clarification of justification of reorganization (maybe a copy of the rationale that was given to IHL)

Faculty should be proactive about saying the things that we want from the administration; if we want to see metrics used for reorg, we need to ask

2-3 Plan of Upcoming year

Communication Plan – had several messages about how poorly we communicate to faculty; what impressions do you have of this issue?

May add brief senate information to USM mailout; create abbreviated minutes with link to full minutes; will have minutes fairly quickly

Volunteers for senators to attend College meetings: Senators give brief overview of the Faculty Senate and recognize senators; Representatives to do so – Tim Rehner (Education and Human Sciences), Melinda McClelland (Business), Bob Press (Arts and Letters), Susan Howell (Science/Technology), ? (Nursing), Adrienne McPhaul (Library)

Have continuing update from Faculty Handbook Committee considering all of the changes with reorganization; discussed recommending retired professor David Beckett to assist Handbook Committee and advisory bodies in revising the Handbook and potentially even advisory body by-laws.

University mailouts format has too much text; formal request last year to UC to truncate